

## **GEO 3930: Global Patterns of Sexually Transmitted Infections**

**Instructor:** Dr. Gabriela Hamerlinck

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**Office:** Turlington 3122

**Office hours:** Mondays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Wednesdays 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Thursdays 11:00 am – noon

& \*appts via email

**Class meetings:** Tues Period 2-3 and Thurs Period 3

**Meeting location:** Turlington Hall Room 3006\*\*

*\*\*please expect to meet for the entire class period.*

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### **Background**

This is a 3 credit-hour course focused on the geography of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The course will begin with an overview on the types of bacteria and viruses transmitted sexually and discuss the geographic patterns of these organisms. Many bacterial STIs can be treated with antimicrobial drugs, though some bacteria are becoming drug resistant. Viral STIs cannot be treated with antimicrobials, although a human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine is now available. There are discrete geographic patterns to these sexually transmitted pathogens. Often, STIs are heavily stigmatized, and because sexual behavior is involved, often misunderstood by the public. Additionally, culture plays a major role in STI control, prevention, and transmission. Groups such as the Gates Foundation have initiated global challenges to design new condoms to promote wider use worldwide, because many cultures don't use condoms. These behavioral decisions are influenced by culture and religion, and STI reduction cannot be achieved without an understanding of these culture/behavior interactions. This course will examine several important bacterial and viral STIs and their control strategies and how culture impacts control or prevention strategies. Sexual behavior, culture, and religion are complex topics and this course aims to introduce these topics through the lens of medical geography and examine how these interactions lead to changing geographic patterns of STIs around the world.

### **In this course, students will be expected to (course objectives):**

- 1) Define sexually transmitted infections and understand what pathogens can be transmitted during sex
- 2) Compare and contrast bacterial and viral STIs and how their biology affects control strategies
- 3) Understand the role of personal behavior and regional culture/religion in preventing or promoting STI persistence

- 4) Describe how stigmatism at the national, regional, or local level can affect STI reporting and future intervention
- 5) Discuss the role of education in STI prevention
- 6) Critically examine how STI outbreaks lead to major epidemics, such as HIV
- 7) Examine how pathogens such as Zika and Ebola may become STIs and how prevention differs from other STIs
- 8) Think critically about STIs in culture and public health

### **Prerequisite**

None.

### **Student Evaluation**

This course will use a variety of methods to evaluate student performance. For all graded work in the course, *rubrics are provided ahead of grading through the online system (currently Canvas)*.

- Quizzes on course content knowledge (10 pts each x 15 = 150 pts)
- In-class exams on course content – mixed multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank (100 pts each x 2 = 200 pts)
- In-class discussion/case study sessions – students will receive reading material or concepts ahead of class or at the start of class and work in small groups or independently to review and discuss. Students will be asked to write about or orally answer critical thinking questions relating course skills to case studies. For example, students may discuss the early days of the HIV epidemic and compare it to the ongoing Ebola outbreaks, where sexual transmission has been confirmed. Students will relate knowledge from lectures and readings on viral STIs and think about how HIV and Ebola differ and then how the future of Ebola may manifest if sexual transmission becomes a larger part of transmission. (15 points each x 10 = 150 pts)
- Writing assignment – Position piece on STI control relating culture, biology, geography, and prevention. Students will draft a short and concise essay describing an STI and relating transmission and prevention to biology and culture, identifying opportunities to improve education or physical control (e.g. condom use) to reduce STI incidence in the future. (100 points)
- Student participation in class accounting for participation in discussions, attendance, and collegiality and timeliness of case studies. There is a rubric provided for participation grading. (100 pts)

***Total points in class = 700***

## **Grading Policy**

This course will employ the A – E grading scale, with 95≥A, 89-94 A-, 86-88 B+, 83-85 B, 79-82 B-1, 76-78 C+, 73-75 C, 72-69 C-, 68-66 D+, 63-65 D, 59-62 D-, <59 E. <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

## **Text**

This course has a reading list updated regularly and PDFs of all readings are provided ahead of time by the instructor either on Canvas or in class.

## **Class attendance, make-up exams, and late work**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

## **Students with disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

For more information visit: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

## **UF grading policies**

Please see the UF Registrar's grading policies for current guidelines not discussed in class.

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

## **Honor Code**

Students are expected to abide by the UF honor code and ethical conduct, listed on the following website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/>

## **Other Concerns**

Please be aware that the University Counseling Center (392-1575), the Student Health Care Center (392-1161) and Student Mental Health (392-1171) can assist students as they work through personal, academic and social issues. Please take care of your health and watch for flu symptoms. Provide advance notice and obtain documentation for excused absences where possible.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>Tuesday Topic</b>	<b>Tuesday Reading</b>	<b>Thursday Topic</b>	<b>Thursday Reading</b>
1	Introduction to medical geography and STIs	None	Bacterial STIs	None
2	Bacterial STI control (antibiotics and condoms)	TBD	Viral STIs	TBD
3	Viral STI control (condoms and vaccines)	TBD	Chlamydia – changings patterns of a common STI	TBD
4	Gonorrhea – then and now and what next – drug resistance	TBD	HIV: history of a global epidemic	TBD
5	HIV country-by-country – It is not an African problem, but a problem in Africa	TBD	Truckers and prostitutes, University affluence: Patterns of HIV spread	TBD
6	HIV – tracking cultural awareness, antiviral drug success and prevention	TBD	Culture, religion, and HIV: how do you stop and epidemic	TBD
7	HPV: the first viral STI with a working vaccine	TBD	Culture, religion, and cancer: STI stigma versus cancer prevention	TBD
8	<b>EXAM 1 REVIEW</b>	None	<b>EXAM 1</b>	None
9	Condoms: what are they and why aren't they working	TBD	Culture and sex: porn star outbreaks and control measures	TBD
10	The next condom – who will design it and who will use them?	TBD	More sex in the media: does pornography reflect culturally accepted practices	TBD
11	Ebola – bats? Monkeys? Primates? STI?	TBD	Future of Ebola as an STI?	TBD
12	Zika – Mosquito control and condoms?	TBD	Will Zika be a sustained STI that requires insect control?	TBD
13	Politics, Religion, and Sex – kept from dinner table talk and critical to healthy future	TBD	How to talk about STIs without Twitter trolls	TBD
14	<b>EXAM 2 REVIEW</b>	None	<b>EXAM 2</b>	None
15	<b><i>Final paper</i></b>			

Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Reading lists and assignments will be added before the Spring semester begins. All readings will be provided by the instructor via Canvas prior to being assigned.